



# *The Sweep*

Royal Kingston Curling Club

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## *Championship Weekend*

# Celebrating our successes

By Martha Tanner

It felt like old times as RKCC celebrated Championship weekend April 14-15 at the end of a full season of uninterrupted curling. There were hugs, handshakes and high spirits as the traditional format resumed.

Teams were piped out by Denis Faubert for an evening draw on Friday and two draws on Saturday and – win or lose – were made to feel like royalty by the Social and Curling Committees and their wonderful volunteers.

Find photos of the winners on pages. More photos are on the website under Photo Gallery.



**Life Member Joanne Miller, second from left, accepts her certificate from teammates, from left, Karen Peters, Bonnie Arlt and Nancy Roantree. Also named Life Members (30 years' membership) were Shawn Suenaga and Gord Lansdown.**

## *Annual General Meeting*

The Annual General Meeting will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, May 31, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. Registration is required – it's free and easy! Just log in to the RKCC website, go to Events at the top of the home page and click on Event Registration. The documents will be available on the website under Members – Documents.



The Junior A Champions are, from left, Jesse Hookey, Medha Charan, Koen Blasko and skip Leah DaCosta.

## Junior program grows from strength to strength

By Michael Berry, Junior Convenor

It was a year of new beginnings and continued strengths for the RKCC Junior Curling Program. As the new Junior Convenor I had much to learn but was aided by the foundation laid by past convenor Kimberly Barker and the Parent Volunteer Committee; Lisa DaCosta, Kari Fraser and Ainslie Splinter. We enjoyed another successful season with approximately 50 children taking part in the curling program divided between our novice curlers/little rocks group and our senior/experienced curlers. Our junior curlers were helped along the way by the excellent coaching they received by a group of truly dedicated volunteers. Thanks go to our group of coaches who gave their Sunday afternoons to help out: Morgan Gagnon, Graham Gibson, Melinda Kelly, Jeff Lloyd, Dale Marecak, Sam Marecak, Alisha Scott, Richard Winsor, and our group of youth coaches Logan Bedard, Andrew DaCosta, and Alexandra Splinter. Special thanks go to Findlay Foods (Kingston) Ltd. who donated hot chocolate for the entire year as well as a cake for the end-of-season party.

Our season highlights include a coaching clinic run by Scott Chadwick in March. In addition to giving his time to help the junior curlers, Scott was kind enough to donate a Team Epping jersey and Balance Plus broom, which were won through a draw by two lucky curlers at our end-of-year party. Other highlights include our participation in the GKC Junior Recreational League. Throughout the 2022-2023 season our club regularly sent two teams to play against other area curlers at the GKC events hosted by the Kingston area clubs.

Our youth competitive curlers had a good season as well. I was lucky to coach our U15 girls Team DaCosta made up of skip Leah DaCosta, vice Adele O'Donnell, second Medha Charan and lead Grace Berry. It was the girls' first season together taking part in competitive play. The team played in bonspiels at the Pembroke Curling Club, Cornwall Curling Club and the Club de curling de Buckingham. The team made great advances in their skills and saw their hard work and commitment pay off with some positive results as the season went on. Team DaCosta are looking forward to next year's competitive season.

Continued on page 3



The Junior B champions, from left: lead Colin Gibson, skip Alex Splinter, vice Grace Berry and second Sam Smith.

### Junior program, continued from page 2.

Team Bedard, coached by RKCC member Dave Fanset, competed at the U15 boys level for the 2022-2023 curling season. The team competed in various U15 events, including the Shorty Jenkins Junior U15 cash spiel in Cornwall in January. The team saw many improvements over the season and very much appreciated Coach Dave's commitment to the team. We are excited to announce our new U18 men's team for the 2023-2024 season. Proudly representing RKCC - team members are Logan Bedard, Koen Blasko, Luke DeGroot, Reid Giffin and Emerson Hare and Coach Dave Fanset. The team plans to play in provincial qualifiers and various Trillium events during the 2023-2024 curling season. They are looking forward to playing together as a team and further developing their curling skills.

The in-house senior youth curling season was built around three draws of round robin play in different curling formats. Starting with triples play, then doubles play, and finally in traditional fours. The season culminated in the Championship Weekend games. In the 'A' final the team of Leah DaCosta, Koen Blasko, Medha Charan and Jesse Hookey defeated the team of Emmerson Hare, Reid Giffin, Jarvis Quenneville and Hannah Perez. The 'B' final was won by Alex Splinter, Grace Berry, Sam Smith and Colin Graham with

a victory over Tim Vankoughnett, Noah Bedard (skipping in place of Tim Vankoughnett), Megan DaCosta (pictured right) and Copelynn Henderson-Boileau.

Next year we will be looking to expand our program even further through bringing back a "badge" system for the curlers to earn and by looking to create more competitive and recreational game opportunities through the GKC. We all look forward to seeing the RKCC Junior Curlers continue to grow in this game.





Photo left, the Junior B runners-up, from left, vice Megan DaCosta, skip Noah Bedard and lead Copelynn Henderson-Boileau.



Copelynn sweeps a rock.



Above, the Junior A runners-up, from left: second Jaarvis Quenneville, vice Reid Giffin, skip Emerson Hare (delivering in photo below) and lead Hannah Perez.



Noah calls line.



Les Loups, from left, skip Logan Bedard, vice Leah DaCosta, second Ewan Jones and leads Megan DaCosta and Noah Bedard.

# Team Acadie wins bronze

By Lisa DaCosta

Five RKCC junior curlers represented Module de l'Acadie at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Elementary School Curling Championship held at Wingham Golf & Curling Club March 30 - April 2nd, 2023. Team Acadie, made up of Logan Bedard (skip), Leah DaCosta (vice), Ewan Jones (second), Noah Bedard and Megan DaCosta (leads), went undefeated in the round robin with three wins and a tie to finish first in their pool. A close game in the semi-finals ended in their first loss to the eventual gold medal winning team from Westfield Elementary in Listowel. Team Acadie came back to win the bronze medal game 11-2 over Elmira, finishing third overall in a field of 32 teams. Bravo, les loups!!



Laura Johnson of Frontenac Secondary School delivers a rock during the Eastern Ontario Secondary Schools Athletic Association (EOSSAA) championships. Find out how the Falcons did on next page.



The boys team from Frontenac Secondary School won gold at the Eastern Ontario championships, earning them a berth at the provincials. From left, coach Sabena Islam, Alex Bulch, Ryan Kreick, Andrew DaCosta, skip Luke DeGroot and staff advisor Sarah Depew.

## Frontenac Falcons soar to new heights

By Jenn De Groot

Frontenac Secondary School Falcons had a great season with their staff advisor Sarah Depew providing fantastic support for a busy championship season.

The girls team of Leia Surette (skip), Cordelia Brown (third), Alanna Craig (second), Laura Johnson (lead) and Hannah Perez (lead) won silver at the Kingston Area Secondary Schools Athletic Association (KASSAA) championship, earning them a berth at the Eastern Ontario Secondary Schools Athletic Association (EOSSAA) championships. They were proud to represent their school in their first trip to EOSSAA curling.

The boys team of Luke De Groot (skip), Andrew DaCosta (vice), Ryan Kreick (second) and Alex Bulch (lead) had a great season winning gold at KASSAA and EOSSAA. At the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) provincials they went 5-0 in their pool before being eliminated in the quarter finals. They are looking forward to next season and improving on their elite eight provincial performance. The team would like to give a big thank you to their coach Sabena Islam, who travelled with them to North Bay for the competition.

All four members of the boys team are also proud recipients of a GKC junior curling scholarship. Thank you GKC for your support of junior curlers.

The Falcons would like to give a special acknowledgement to Linda Lott who coordinates the high school program, ensuring the teams have access to regular ice time and equipment. Linda also organized the EOSSAA championships at RKCC and provided financial assistance through her fundraising efforts to help the boys team with their OFSAA expenses. Her support of high school curling means so much to the Falcon team.



Mixed champions L-R: Anthony Hale, Denise Mulville, skip Michael Berry, Andrea Berry.



Evening Men's Club champions, from left, Peter Fowler, Anthony Hale, Kevin Pereira, skip Alex Tosh.

# Championship Weekend April 14-15, 2023



Doubles B champs, Douglas Connors and Celia Russell.



Evening Ladies B Flight champions, from left, skip Mary Paterson, Brenda Charette, Gay Chamberlain, Kathy King.



Evening Men's B Flight champions, from left, Richard Dickson, skip John Giles, Regan Reshke and Leslie Higginson.



Day Men's A Flight champions, from left, Steve Ottenhof, Peter Coughlin, Rick Ward, skip Peter Waugh and Al McLaughlin.



The Day Ladies A flight runners-up, from left: Sarah Young (sparing for Andrea Berry), Lisa Thorburn, Wendy McCullough and skip Liz Baer.



Above, Doubles C flight winners were Alisha and Craig Scott



Left, Mixed B winners, from left: skip Phil Tomsett, Samantha Tomsett, Megan Wheeler, Monica Kirk, Mario Fabbro, Drew Phillips.



The Evening Men's A Flight winners and winners of the Rod Leeder Grand Aggregate Trophy, from left: Chris Barkley, Jason Boyce, Steve Lodge and skip Noel Herron.



The Overall Ladies Flight Champions was the Evening Ladies team of, from left, skip Denise Mulville, Suzanne Herron, Monica Kirk, Susan Hara and Melissa Wong. Team Mulville defeated the Day Ladies A Flight champions, Team Jenkins, skipped by Lisa Freeman. Suzanne Herron skipped the team for the overall championship, as Denise was skipping her Carrie Cole-winning team on the adjacent sheet.



The Evening Men's Club runners-up, from left, skip Alex Tosh, John Latimer, Mark Publicover and Bob Gray.

# Day Men's Flight



Men's B Flight winners, from left: Skip Greg Ruse, Tom Bryant, Ivan Brandsma, John Latimer. Missing from photo is Tom Miller.



Men's C Flight winners, from left: Terry Romain (sparing for Barry Niles), Skip Dave Lollar, Larry Magee, and Bill Grant.



Men's D Flight winners, from left: Gerrit Buitenhuis, Skip Bill Coulter, Martin Sherris, John Emerton (sparing for Doug Boyd).

## *Doubles season*

# It's a wrap!

**By Peter Coughlin, Open Doubles Convenor**

The 2022-23 season is a wrap, with some great curling on Championship Saturday, April 15, 2023.

The A flight game had two very strong teams trading points, pushing the game to an extra end, when Briana Dubue and Melissa Wong narrowly beat Denise Mulville and Anthony Hale. This was the first league championship win for the three-person team of Briana, Melissa and Corey St-Laurent and their team will now join Mulville and Hale as Doubles champions on the Riverhead Open Doubles league trophy.



**A Champs, L-R, Corey St-Laurent holding Kayce, Melissa Wong and Briana Dubue.**

The B flight game was also a close match. Winners Douglas Connors and Celia Russell had their hands full to win the game against the hard-sweeping Graham Berry and Carolyn Schmid. Graham and Carolyn had finished at the top of C Flight and opted to compete in the playoffs in the B flight bringing a strong finish to a solid season.

On April 5, 2023, the C flight winners were Alisha and Craig Scott – with a special shout out to Craig, as a first-season RKCC curler.

The Open Double league was at capacity with 24 teams this season and the A, B and C flight groups all had a balance of skilled curling, friendly competition, great fun and sportsmanship. The often-discussed topic of best strategy for the power play option was a favourite post-game chat over fine beverages. Our Christmas social event, with a modified red vs blue 'continental' scoring was a chance to enjoy some curling with other league members and we will be planning a social event for next season. In December, the league welcomed curlers graduating from the Adult Learn to Curl and Carlye Oda and Ian Gauthier gained confidence and skill throughout the rest of the Doubles season. It was wonderful to have Denise Mulville and Anthony Hale compete at the Provincial level for Mixed Doubles in February 2023 and it was awesome to have such fine representation from our league and club.

Looking ahead to 2023-24 curling – planning to play Doubles again? Do get your registration in promptly in September, as several experienced curlers have expressed interest in joining our league. We also have a fine roster of now experienced Doubles spares to play on Wednesday evening and a special thanks to those curlers who help out, often on short notice. Mark your calendars for our Open Doubles bonspiel scheduled for Saturday, November 25, 2023 at RKCC.

Finally, thanks to John Leinweber, our scheduling guru and the always ready to help Mike Flowers and a special note for Melissa Wong. We were excited to have Melissa join our group of league convenors this season. If you would like to help out next year, there are many different volunteers needed to keep it all sliding to the button. Have a great off-season.



Denise Mulville's team won the Carrie Cole Evening Ladies Club Championship. From left are Melinda Kelly, Gay Chamberlain (for Gillian Turnbull), skip Denise Mulville and Amy Hacker.



## *Evening Ladies Club & Flight*

# Cheers to a fabulous season

By Liz Baer, Evening Ladies Convenor

What an exciting year for both Evening Ladies Club and Flight teams! Our numbers are growing, we have many new curlers and we all can feel the excitement of curling together and the friendships we have formed. Congratulations to all our teams for an outstanding year!

I would like to thank our Executive Committee for their commitment and time to our club. To Karen Matheson and Carol Fitzpatrick for managing our Flight teams and Andrea Berry for Club. Thank you, ladies, for all you do! A huge thank you to our Social Committee of Karen Peters, Nancy Roantree (our Secretary as well!), Georgia O'Shaughnessy, and Tanya Ledford for all their enthusiasm and hard work with the Ladies Opening Meet and Greet, the Evening Ladies Bonspiel "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun!" and our Christmas Dinner. You are the best! Thanks, too, to Karen Matheson and April Welsh for assisting me throughout the year. To Linda Lott, our CurlON representative, you give so much to our club, and we are so very grateful.

Congratulations to our Carrie Cole Champions for 2023: Denise Mulville, Gay Chamberlain (for Gillian Turnbull), Melinda Kelly and Amy Hacker, ELC. Congratulations, also, to the DLC runners up: Debbie Hynes, Francine Korczynski, Cathy Fobert and Sheila McKirdy.

Enjoy the summer and we look forward to a new season ahead!



4-person stick league champions, from left: Steve Mansell, David Townsend, Tom Sephton and John Latimer..



2-person champions, Bob Helliar, left, and Ron Cameron.

## Stick leagues wrap up the season

By Kathy Jackson, 2022-2023 Stick League Convenor

The Stick League final games were played on Saturday afternoon of Championship weekend. We were well represented with strong curlers who showcased the stick leagues to the rest of our Club. Both games featured great shot-making and were entertaining to watch. Congratulations to our fellow stick league curlers for their fine performances.

**Ron Cameron & Bob Helliar** won the 2-Person Stick final and the championship trophy. **Howard Herron & Bill Racz** were the runners-up and the recipients of the 'Remembering Edmund (Ed) Bauder' Runners-Up plaque. This was especially poignant for Howard who was a very close friend of Ed.

In the four-person stick game, the **Townsend team** emerged victorious over the **Bush team** for the championship title.

The Townsend team was comprised of skip Dave Townsend, vice Tom Sephton, second John Latimer, lead Al McLaughlin, and fifth Steve Mansell (who spared for Al in the final.) The recipients of the 'Remembering Edmund (Ed) Bauder' Runners-up plaque were the Bush team of Tony Bush at vice and throwing fourth rocks, Rich Waller at skip, Collin Brown at second and Rick Thorburn at lead.

As we look ahead to next year, there are some changes planned in both leagues.

In the 2-person stick league, the league format will be changing to divisions in order to address the imbalance in skill level and the uneven number of games played. As well, in both leagues, we will introduce a fall and a winter portion to the schedule to better accommodate new curlers at the start of the year as well as after the 'Learn to Curl' program. We also hope that this change will assist with the ongoing challenge of curlers who are only in Kingston for part of the season (i.e., the snowbirds.) We hope that these changes will improve the league and the curling experience for all participants of the stick leagues. Again, congratulations to the winners and runners-up in both leagues! Have a safe and enjoyable summer while you step away from curling for a short while. See you in the fall!



2-person runners up Howard Herron, left, and Bill Racz.



The Day Ladies Club Champions, from left, Sheila McKirdy, Cathy Fobert, Francine Korczynski and skip Debbie Hynes.



# Day Ladies season recap

By France Kelly, Convenor, DL Club.

The season has ended more or less as planned for a change, with everyone adjusting to the new normal. The Day Ladies Club Champions represented the league in the Carrie Cole playoff game Championship day. Debbie Hynes' team with Francine Korczynski at Vice, Cathy Fobert at Second and Sheila McKirdy at Lead made us proud.

Warm congratulations to our draw winners:

Draw 1: Jan Ray, Debbie Hynes, Brenda Merkle and Bev Ayling

Draw 2: Colleen Bennett (Tues), Gisele Cyr, Lisa DaCosta and Bev Ayling

Draw 3: Joan Doucet (Thurs.), Josee Dumas-Hurt, Brenda Merkle and Sheila McKirdy

Draw 4: Debbie Hynes, Francine Korczynski, Cathy Fobert, Sheila McKirdy

Everyone enjoyed some great curling and is looking forward to spending some time out of doors. Enjoy the summer and see you next fall!

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## *Volunteer Survey*

**Thank you to everyone who completed the Volunteer Survey. It was wonderful to see such a great response from so many new - and familiar - names. If you haven't completed it yet, the survey is on the website. We hope to match you up soon with opportunities you will enjoy!**

*– Martha Tanner, Communications Chair*



Winners of THE PRATT Day Men's Bonspiel, 'The Bruins', from left, second Doug Boulter, skip Bob Daley, vice John Koronyi, and lead David Lindensmith.

# 'The Bruins' win The Pratt

By Dave Lollar, Senior Men's Convenor

The Spring edition of The PRATT Day Men's in-house bonspiel was held on March 10, 2023. This event creates a great deal of interest within the club, so once again we had a full draw of 48 curlers with a number of spares signing up for last-minute replacements.

The day started off with a light breakfast organized by Dave Leeson. The spiel format was three four-end Skins games. An excellent Chinese lunch was prepared by Chinese Palace and served by Jim Rines and November winners Teams Faubert and Matthews. Kathy Lollar baked delicious apple crisp for dessert. This year a Hot Shots competition was offered to participants in place of the corner-to-corner, which included a draw to the button, tap - raise a rock and hit and roll. Barry Niles was crowned the Hot Shot Champion for this event, attaining the highest score of 8 points out of a possible 15 points.

Special thanks to all the volunteers that step up to make this day run smoothly. Congratulations to this year's winners, "The Bruins" skipped by Bob Daley, vice John Koronyi, second Doug Boulter and lead David Lindensmith. The teams are formed by random draw by position by the organizing committee. The Bruins will have the chance to organize the 2023 Fall edition of The PRATT!

## And the survey says . . .

*The RKCC Social Committee thanks everyone who completed our survey.*

### What did you tell us you want?

46%: access to curling events	41%: card games	38%: curling skills
36%: golf events	38%: alcohol tasting	36%: wine and cheese

**Potluck and themed dinners were also popular.**

*Stay tuned as the Social Committee works to meet your requests.*



**First Draw winners from RKCC, from left: Kerry Johnson, John Latimer, skip John Koronyi and Eric McLean.**



**Second Draw and Overall winners, from left: Dave Barr, Ken McMillan, skip Garth Mitchell and Dave Bracken**

## **RKCC teams sweep Super Senior Invitational**

**By Dave Lollar, Senior Men's Convenor**

On March 17, 2023 the Super Senior invitational bonspiel was held at RKCC. I would like to thank Steve Quinn for years of dedication of organizing this Bonspiel; it was quite apparent from communication with participants from previous events that they were very happy playing in this event and actually made it a part of their curling schedule. This was the 14th year that the Super Senior Bonspiel has been hosted by RKCC. What is unique about this spiel is that the prizes awarded historically have been all meat prizes. This year we had a total of 20 teams from Eastern Ontario, 10 teams in each draw, featuring two eight-end games with a points format. Special thanks to our sponsors Bob's Butcher Shop, Robert J. Reid and Sons Funeral Home, All BBQ Canada and DAFT Beer.

Once again our club volunteers made the day a success: John Berry organized the kitchen crew that provided delicious beef on a bun for lunch, Kathy Lollar made the apple crisp for dessert, Dave Leeson and Shawn Kelly looked after scoring and organizing the draws. Julie and Deb kept everyone hydrated at the bar, and there were lots of positive comments from participants about the ice conditions. Thanks to Jeff, Paul and Giselle for their continued efforts to provide excellent curling conditions. Congratulations to The First Draw winners from RKCC - Team Koronyi with a total of 28.5 points. The Second Draw winners were also from RKCC. With 32.5 points, Team Mitchell skipped by Garth Mitchell were also the overall winners.

# ‘Disco fever’ affects Grandmothers & Great Aunts Bonspiel



By Karen Matheson

The Grandmothers and Great Aunts Bonspiel was held on March 22, 2023. It was the 48<sup>th</sup> year for the bonspiel after a few years off. It was a Disco theme, with many of the teams showing their disco fever. We had 16 teams for a fun-filled day of curling, food and frivolity. There were two draws with two winners: Donna Jeffery’s team won the early draw and the Heather Ramshaw team from the Napanee & District Curling Club won the late draw.

The Overall winner was Heather Ramshaw’s team of Donna Perrin, Jane Pearson and Sheila Baker. Special thanks to the businesses that donated prizes: Kingston Food Tour, The Artistry Collective, Tango Nuevo, Momentum Pilates and the Limestone Quilters. A big shout-out to Diane Labrie for her sponsorship and to all the RKCC members that made this a successful bonspiel.

# Popularity of Day Ladies Flight prompts move to new day for 2023-24



Above, A Flight winners, from left, Anna Voskamp, Debbie Hynes, Judy Sly and skip Lisa Freeman (who played the latter half of the season for Lin Jenkins). Team Freeman went on to play the EL Flight team for the overall flight title on Championship weekend, but lost to Team Mulville.



Left, B Flight winners, from left, Debbie Mansell, Martha Tanner, Brenda Charette and skip Mary Paterson.

## By Philippa Fugler, DL Flight Convenor

The Day Ladies Flight League had a total of 59 registered curlers on 15 teams, a well-subscribed league. Curling commenced in October with a full round robin involving all teams until mid-January. The league was then split into A and B divisions with two round robins. The A division winner was the team of Lisa Freeman (skip), Judy Sly (vice), Debbie Hynes (second) and Anna Voskamp (lead) and the B division winner was Mary Paterson (skip), Brenda Charette, Martha Tanner and Debbie Mansell. An unfortunate consequence of having 15 teams and six sheets of ice was that we were short of ice time! We had to go looking for open ice where there would be as few conflicts as possible. We settled on Monday and the Senior Men's Flight gave us one sheet a week. Monday worked, but had some drawbacks – reporting scoring was difficult and some curlers also curled EL Flight on Monday evenings resulting in two games in one day. This lack of ice spurred us on to look for a better solution for the 2023-24 season. After much debate we chose to ask the DL members to vote on switching Tuesday DL Club ice for the Flight ice. Tuesday Club had three sheets on Tuesday morning which were rarely used and six sheets on Tuesday afternoon. Ninety-two of the 107 DL members voted, with 61 agreeing to the change and 31 voting against.

As the saying goes, “Life is all about changes”, so your executive is optimistic that the change of day will encourage more ladies to try Flight and enjoy the fun of curling with the same team all year.



As we bid farewell to the curling ice for another year, RKCC invites you to join us for another exciting Pickleball season starting **May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023**. Still considered the fastest growing sport in North America, pickleball combines elements of tennis, badminton and table tennis.

This year we will be hosting an Open House (no admission fee) from **1-3 pm on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>; and 6-8 pm on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>** for both new and past participants. Equipment and instruction will be available for newcomers.

Again, we have 6 courts available for a drop-in format with rotation of participants based on win/loss, resulting in more efficient and balanced play with minimal wait times. All levels of play are welcome. Cost remains at \$8 per person per 2 hr session. Facilitators will be on-site to coordinate this program and ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone.

**Pickleball Season begins May 1<sup>st</sup> and ends August 25<sup>th</sup>**

**May - June: Monday to Friday 9 -11 am**  
**Tuesday and Wednesday 7-9 pm**  
***New* - Wednesday 1-3 pm for intermediate level play**

**July - Aug.: Monday to Friday 9-11 am (Tues, Wed & Thurs hosted by the Kingston Seniors' Association)**  
**Tuesday and Wednesday 7-9 pm**  
***New* - Wednesday 1-3 pm for intermediate level play**



For additional information, please contact Deb Wilkin at 613-453-9790 [dwilkin2@cogeco.ca](mailto:dwilkin2@cogeco.ca), or Denis Faubert 613-484-4803 [dfaibert@bell.net](mailto:dfaibert@bell.net)

# Game Umpire has best seat in the house

By Martha Tanner, Sweep Editor

Tom Sephton has a front row seat to many of Canada's most high-profile curling competitions. He is frequently seen on TSN and is on a first-name basis with curling's most elite competitors. When he speaks, they listen. If there is a problem on-ice, they call him.

Tom is an official or Game Umpire with Curling Canada. His most recent gigs include the Men's Worlds in Ottawa and the Brier in London.

Like most other officials, he does it for the love of the game. It certainly isn't for the money, because game umpires, like timers and other officials, are not paid. Only their expenses (air fare, hotels, meals) are covered.

"It has been a lot of fun," he says of his 15 years as an official.

"I have met a lot of different people from all walks of life.

"I enjoy meeting the curlers and the other umpires from across Canada. You meet the volunteers, timers, ice technicians, and club organizers. Everyone who volunteers is fantastic. It's a really fun time."

There are five levels of officiating with Curling Canada (CC) beginning with Time Clock Operator/Observer (previously Level 1), CC Member Association Game Umpire (previously Level 2), CC Member Association Chief Umpire (Level 3), National Game Umpire, Deputy Chief Umpire and Chief Umpire (Level 4) and National Chief Umpire (Level 5). It's a fairly lengthy progression, with mentorship and evaluation and practice at every level.

Tom is a Level 3 umpire, having been a Chief Umpire for the Nova Scotia Curling Association for the four years prior to the start of the pandemic in 2020 and a Deputy Chief Umpire for three or four years before that.

After the pandemic "hit", he moved from Nova Scotia to Kingston to be closer to his grandchildren.

Tom started curling when he was 12 years old. In 1972 he skipped the winning team in the Quebec Junior Boys provincial championship. In 2011 he played lead on the Steve Ogden team from the Mayflower Curling Club in the Nova Scotia Men's Molson Provincial Championship, losing the final game to Shawn Adams and his chance to compete at the 2011 Brier in London.

So he was already a competitive curler in Nova Scotia when he was recruited by a Chief Umpire there who felt that having a competitive curler on the officiating crew would be beneficial, "someone who knew what it's like as a player to be out there under stressful psychological and emotional conditions."



**Tom at the 2021 Home Hardware Canadian Mixed Doubles Championship in the Calgary 'bubble'.**

**Continued on page 21.**

## Game Umpire, continued from page 20.

Tom did his Level 1 certification as a statistician. “You have to know if a shot is made or not, and it helps if you’re a curler.” He has also done the stats at a couple of Briers.

“It gives you a different perspective,” Tom says. Although he appreciates officiating at national, elite-level games where curlers know the game inside out, Tom has also enjoyed working with youth curlers, especially during the years he spent in Nova Scotia, officiating at games from U14 to U21 and watching these young athletes get better and better at the game.

When he met Matt Manuel, skip of Team Nova Scotia at the 2023 Brier in London, it was “like old home week”. Tom first met Matt when the young skip was competing to represent Nova Scotia at the Canada Winter Games, but he had seen him competing through U18, U21 and at the university level.

As a Game Umpire, however, Tom is scrupulously neutral. The advent of betting has made it even more important and training now includes watching for signs of game manipulation.

“You cannot get emotionally involved because of betting. It’s important that you count everything. Before the stones are kicked away at the end of the game, you still have to know exactly how many rocks were counting because of margins and spreads in betting.”

If you look closely at a televised game, you’ll notice that the Game Umpire has a clipboard stowed discreetly beside his chair which he uses to jot down notes.

“I keep track of scores, hog line violations, whether a stationary stone was touched and replaced, if a stone is touching the centre line, whether it went out of play, whether the clock is running when it shouldn’t be. As a game umpire, you’re always taking notes, kind of creating a diary. And you’re watching the clock. Sometimes the timer is slow at the beginning of the game. If you’re Kevin Koe, you need that time.”



Screen shot from 2023 Worlds, Tom on left.

If a team complains that another is releasing the rock after the hogline, a “rover” or official from a few sheets over may observe without being too obvious about it. Complaints about lingering hands and knees on the ice are rare, as players know all too well how this affects the ice.

Brooms smashed in a fit of anger and carelessly dropped F-bombs are another issue, and are dealt with off-ice, away from the television cameras. Now that the Scotties and Brier have cash-sharing, Tom explains, every team receives a cheque minus penalties for swearing.

When measuring rocks with the micrometer, officials follow a standard procedure such as always putting the feet of the device on the ice first to stabilize it and cleaning the point of the of the measure before setting it carefully in the pinhole. The rocks are always measured clockwise and umpires are allowed to measure three times. If it still seems like a tie, then the Chief Umpire is called in.

A laser measure is used to measure closest to the pin for Last Stone Draw, but the micrometer is still the most accurate measurement otherwise.

With so much on the line, you’d think a game umpire would be nervous before games. But with years of training under their belts and having talked to the players and coaches before games and practices, they’re prepared.

Continued on page 22.

**Tom with the storied Brier trophy.**



“I don’t get nervous, I get ‘up’ for the game,” says Tom. “We do the pre-game practice and last stone draws, do measurements for hammer. It’s important because it is used to split ties. By the time the game gets started, you’re into it.

“As a game umpire, you’re immersed in the game, you know which exactly stone is being thrown. You may not know the call, because the television camera might be in the way. But there is so much that you can anticipate. For example, when a team is going to call a time-out, you can tell by their body language. The timer is also watching, so by the time I call it up, they already know.”

Since curlers are not allowed on the ice without an official present, game umpires may be at the arena from 6:30 in the morning until 11 at night.

“When there are four draws a day, it’s tough,” admits Tom. “The Scotties, Brier and Worlds have three draws a day. The longest day is when there is late-night practice. After all the games, each team is allowed 10 minutes. It’s usually the coach and the alternate on each sheet you’re playing. If you’re playing two games the next day, you get those two sheets of ice. Late-night practice lasts an hour, so you may be there til 11:30 at night. Normally you get the next morning off. You officiate three games and then get one off.”

And there’s not much time for socializing with the rest of the officiating crew. They may be all together for the volunteer breakfast, but that’s it. There are debriefings after each draw and each day, but you will never see an umpire unwinding in The Patch.

Tom says his worst memory as a Game Umpire was during a 2015 Grand Slam event when Brad Gushue fell face-first onto the ice during a game and had to be taken to hospital. That was bad, but worse for Tom was when Brad reappeared and said he wanted to go back into the game. “Before I could open my mouth to say, “no”, the Technical Director (who had precedence since this wasn’t a Curling Canada event) said, “Sure, go ahead.” At that time there was no concussion protocol, but based on my own competitive experience, I never would have allowed it,” says Tom.

“There were only two ends left and Newfoundland was in control. Brad was wobbly, he didn’t make his shots, and they lost! Brad was sick for months afterwards with a concussion. Within a year, Curling Canada had a concussion protocol in place.”

Tom has been a game umpire at national and world competitions in Canada and was chief umpire at the Ontario Winter Games in Pembroke, his first role with CurlON.

“I’ve never been a Chief Umpire or Deputy Chief Umpire at a national event, so that may be a future role,” he says.

If you’re interested in learning more about curling officials and curling umpires, Tom would be happy to share what he knows or you can find out more on the Curling Canada website at [www.curling.ca/officiating-structure](http://www.curling.ca/officiating-structure).

“Curling Canada is always looking for good timers. It’s not for everybody – you can’t be everyone’s friend. It’s a different part of the game, and there is a time commitment. Some people are naturally inclined to be referees or umpires. And we do need a crew of young people coming through.”

# Spring Plant Sale



**Saturday, May 13, 2023**

**9 am to 12 pm**

**Royal Kingston Curling Club**

**Indoor and Outdoor Plants**

**Donations of plants and cuttings will be accepted Friday, May 12, 12 to 5 pm**

**Please ask your family, friends and neighbours if they have donations.**

**For further information contact:  
Linda Lott at [spyderlott@sympatico.ca](mailto:spyderlott@sympatico.ca)**





## Ladies close season in style

By Candace McConomy, Day Ladies Social  
Convenor

The Ladies Closing Dinner, Ebony and Ivory, held on Tuesday April 11 was a great success. We had 93 ladies attending and a lovely dinner by Skippers, thank you, Janet. We were grateful to have five great servers, Murray Matheson, John Emerton, Bronek Korczynski, Michael Fobert and David McConomy. They made it more relaxed for the ladies. We thank you. I would also like to thank my Assistant Cathy Fobert for all her help in organizing this dinner.

# RKCC Summer Golf Tour

Join us this summer for a tour  
of our local golf courses.

### 5 tour stops including:

**Amherstview (May 25)**

**Camden Braes (June 16)**

**Bay of Quinte (July 14)**

**Smugglers Glen (August 15)**

**Rivendell (September 11)**



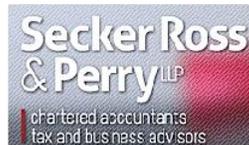
Play with your regular foursome, as a pair, or as a single.  
Prizes awarded at each tour stop and at the Welcome Back BBQ.  
\$20 Registration fee includes Welcome Back BBQ in September.

Cost for each stop is course fee plus \$10 per stop.

Register on RKCC website under Events now!

**Let's go hit some balls!!**

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